



**Ready For School  
Connects**

**OCASI Conference  
October 2007**

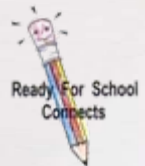
# Session Overview

- Introduction to RfSC
- Why this project is special
- RfSC toolkit & website
- Tips for recreating this project in your community
- Next steps
- Q & A

# Project Description

## Ready for School Connects

- School readiness program for newcomer families
- Funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto
- An initiative of the Growing Up Healthy Downtown partnership
- Completed it's sixth year of programs
- Created a toolkit in order to share effective practices with other service providers



# Who attends RfSC?

Ready for School Connects is for:

- Newcomer families who have been in Canada less than 5 years
- Have a child aged 3 - 6 who is entering school for the first time this September
- First language spoken at home is not English



Ready for School is for us!



And it is for us too!



# What makes RfSC special?

## RfSC

- Focuses on newcomers
- Whole family approach
- Follow up component
- Advisory Committee
- Evaluation processes

## Other School Readiness Programs

- Not newcomer focussed
- English language levels too difficult for ESL population
- Child focussed
- Little or no follow up support

# The Toolkit

- Purpose: to share learnings with other service providers
- How it can be used: to enhance existing programs or to start new initiatives
- Helpful for: front line workers, managers and directors
- Where to find it: free to download at [www.rfsc.ca](http://www.rfsc.ca)
- Additions: Healthy Child Screening manual & Snack Menu/Seasonal Produce Chart



# Toolkit Summary

Introduction: history, partners, description

Administration: staffing, outreach, evaluation

Working with Newcomers: issues

Parent component: workshops, supports,  
community resources

Children's component: curriculum, literacy,  
behaviour

Appendices: sample forms, activity schedules,  
brochures

# The Website

Ready For School Connects

[The Toolkit](#) | [Appendices](#) | [Songs](#) | [Healthy Child Screening](#) | [Links](#) | [Contact](#)



**Project Description**

This guide provides community service agencies and schools with a framework for creating programs intended to support newcomer families in the transition from home to school.

## Ready For School Connects

[The Toolkit](#) | [Appendices](#) | [Songs](#) | [Healthy Child Screening](#) | [Links](#) | [Contact](#)



### **THE PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT IS TO PRESENT THE**

learnings and effective practices of the first three-years of the Ready for School Connects (RfSC) project. This toolkit offers service providers a project model and tools. The model and tools can be used to enhance existing work with newcomer populations and assist in the development of new programs. The information contained will be of interest to front line workers, teachers, settlement workers, managers, executive directors and principals. Whether you are developing proposals or delivering services, this toolkit will provide helpful guidelines and information.

This model has been developed for newcomer populations but it can also be used for other families who need additional support, ie: children with special needs. This model can be used alongside any school readiness program for families.

**Download the Toolkit**  
(Print version, 12Mb pdf file)



## Ready For School Connects

The Toolkit | **Appendices** | Songs | Healthy Child Screening | Links | Contact



### SAMPLES OF VARIOUS FORMS, BROCHURES AND

documents are available in Word format here. We give permission to download and adapt the samples for use in your own school readiness programs. You are encouraged and welcome to use the ideas and information contained in this toolkit to enhance existing programs or to use as a model for new programs. You may not use the Ready for School Connects name without written permission from the RfSC project.

1. **Download** Sample Letter of Agreement (includes attachments A & B)
2. **Download** Sample Program Leader Job Posting and Job Description
3. **Download** Sample **Poster** and **Brochure**
4. **Download** Sample Registration Form
5. **Download** Sample Welcome Letter
6. **Download** Sample Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
7. **Download** Sample Evaluation Questions and Methods
8. **Download** Sample Follow Up Questions for phone calls and school visits
9. **Download** Sample Community Resource Lists (agency specific and city wide)
10. **Download** Sample Children's Activity Schedules (includes two versions – for staff and parents)
11. **Download** Sample Skills Assessment Checklist
12. **Download** Sample Activity Suggestion Sheet
13. **Download** Sample Graduation Certificate
14. **Download** Publication Details
15. **Download** Sample Daily Safety Checklist and Overview
16. **Download** Songs Lyrics

**Download** All 16 Appendices (2.3Mb zip file)





### APPENDIX 16: OUR FAVOURITE SONGS

1. [Download](#) Good Morning Train (1Mb mp3 file)
2. [Download](#) A Little Bit Up (2.3Mb mp3 file)
3. [Download](#) Old MacDonald (1.5Mb mp3 file)
4. [Download](#) Twinkle Twinkle (1Mb mp3 file)
5. [Download](#) Wheels on the Bus (2.2Mb mp3 file)
6. [Download](#) Go Bananas (1Mb mp3 file)
7. [Download](#) Roley Poley (1.2Mb mp3 file)
8. [Download](#) Hokey Pokey (1.8Mb mp3 file)
9. [Download](#) 5 Green and Speckled Frogs (2Mb mp3)
10. [Download](#) Sleeping Bunnies (1.9Mb mp3 file)

[Download](#) All 10 songs (15.5Mb .zip file)

Songs sung by Aaron Chan.



### Healthy Child Screening

**Download the Manual** (Print version, 1.1Mb pdf file)

Since the Ready for School Connects toolkit was published, the project has worked with the EYII team to provide Healthy Child Screening days for RfSC participants. The screenings provide newcomer families with single point of access to health care professionals who administer preliminary screening and make recommendations for referrals and follow-up when needed. Early identification and intervention are key elements of this model and the principle of coordination and collaboration is fundamental.

Screening stations include:

- Hearing
- Dental
- Vision
- Social / emotional / development
- Physical Assessment
- Nutrition
- Speech and Language
- Settlement
- Community information and resources

Newcomer families benefit from this one-stop access to health care services through the identification of possible areas of concern for their children and by connecting with community resources and services for follow-up prior to starting school. The extensive follow-up supports families in following through on recommended referrals and involves Nurses, Social Workers and Community Health Workers. This day also helps newcomer families, if needed, to connect with a primary care provider at a neighbouring Community Health Centre or a community Doctor.

The success of the screenings is due to the joint efforts of many community agency partners and to the leadership of the EYII staff in coordinating the screening and partners. To find out more about the screenings and step-by-step instructions on **how to set up a similar initiative in your own community** please check out the Healthy Child Screening Manual produced by the Queen Victoria Partners for Early Learning and the First Duty Project.

## Ready For School Connects

The Toolkit | Appendices | Songs | Healthy Child Screening | Links | Contact



If you have any questions, comments or feedback  
you can reach us at:

### **READY FOR SCHOOL CONNECTS**

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# Top Tips

- Location - providing the summer programs in schools is ideal
- Outreach - spread the word through past participants, community agencies and schools
- Staffing - interdisciplinary teams bring diversity
- Family supports - interpretation is essential
- Follow up - supporting families once children are in school
- Children's Curriculum - focuses on building independence, communication and social skills
- Family Focus - prepares entire family for school



# Next Steps

- Further development of training tools
- Pilot training session
- Revise tools based on feedback
- Offer training support to new RfSC initiatives in other communities



# Contact Information

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